Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2011
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe, log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the following sites:

http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm
Now available:
http://www.atarinews.org

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #1332 08/12/11

~ Operation Shady RAT! ~ People Are Talking! ~ Will Mario Jump Ship?
~ HP Cuts Tablet Prices! ~ How America Uses Web! ~ Red 3DS Is Coming!
~ More Fake Apple Stores ~ Chinese Smuggle iPads! ~ DefCon Adds Kids!

~ Mac OS X Passes Linux! ~ Web Rally for UK Barber ~ The iPad Trumps Oil!

-* China Hit by 500,000 Attacks *-
-* Hackers' Mission: Operation Facebook? *-
-* Is ChronoPay Tied to MacDefender Scareware? *-

=~=~=~=

->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

There's so much to talk about this week, that I have no idea where to begin - or even to discuss! The world's economy woes (how's that for an understatement??) are frightening. The riots in the streets of the UK are deplorable, regardless of the protesters' original reasoning. Kids attending this year's DefCon and learning how to become hackers - now that's a terrific idea?! The hacktivist group Anonymous dreams of "killing" FaceBook! More fake Apple stores found in China; now there's a real surprise (not!)! How about a Twitter campaign to get Muppets Ernie and Bert to marry because there's a "claim" that they're gay?

Where is this world going? You know what, I could go on and on about any of these topics - just because they are so irritating! The U.S. politicians have a fierce partisan struggle over our debt, and now the world's economy is in turmoil (or more of one!). Do what we elected you to do - to work for the country and its citizens rather than your own agenda(s)! In the UK (and elsewhere in the world) - there are legitimate reasons to protest, and legitimate ways to do so. Violent mob mentality has no place in this. Using a reasonable protest as an excuse to riot in the streets and destroy property and injure/kill innocent people is unacceptable behavior and should be dealt with accordingly.

Teaching kids to be hackers? Terrific vocation or hobby - this one needs no explanation, it's stupid. Hackers planning to wipe out Facebook, even if a rumor that is false, is more malicious behavior by misguided individuals who are hackers. Fake Apple stores found in China? Does this even need discussion? And finally, some misguided individuals with ideals of "political correctness" want a couple of puppets to get married because if they're "best friends", they must be gay and set some form of example. Puppets??!!

But, I'm not going to go any further because my blood pressure is high enough without putting it through the rafters! You all have your own opinions about some or all of these, so I don't plan to sway you either way. I'll just end here, and relax with this week's issue! Enjoy!

Until next time...

=~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - Nintendo Announces Red 3DS!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Mario To Jump to iPhone?

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Nintendo Announces Red 3DS, More Upcoming Games

The price cut for the Nintendo 3DS officially goes into effect this weekend - though some retailers are already offering reduced-price models - but if you re willing to wait a few more weeks, you ll be able to pick up more than just a cheaper 3DS. Starting September 9, you ll also be able to pick up a "flame red" version of the handheld 3-D gaming system.

Nintendo announced the upcoming arrival of the red 3DS in U.S. and European markets early this morning, and also offered up some details about the new 3DS titles that will go on sale between now and the holidays. Among the planned 2011 releases are 3DS games based on popular franchises like Star Fox, Super Mario, and Pokemon.

Here s a quick breakdown of what will be available, and when it s expected to hit shelves in the U.S., according to Nintendo:

* The new Star Fox game, Star Fox 64 3D, will be released September 9.

* Pokemon fans will be happy to hear that Nintendo is targeting an October 24 release for Pokemon Rumble Blast, the first fully 3-D title in the franchise.

* And don t worry, folks - Mario is in the mix, too. Offering a double dose of the popular plumber-verse, Super Mario 3D Land will be released in November and Mario Kart 7 will be released in December.

* Finally, a new Sonic the Hedgehog game for the 3DS, Sonic Generations, will also hit shelves before the holidays.

With all of these announcements, it s difficult not to think of this weekend s price cut as a full-scale relaunch for the struggling system, but it remains to be seen whether the new titles and the "flame red" paint job will help bring the company, well out of the red.

Mario Pressured to Jump to IPhone as Nintendo Wii, 3DS Slump

In "Super Mario 3DLand," Nintendo Co. will make its iconic Italian plumber battle turtle-like Koopa Troopas on its 3-D player. The company instead should develop titles for Apple Inc. (AAPL) s iPhone, investors

say.

The rift highlights the dilemma President Satoru Iwata faces as consumers shun Nintendo devices to play games on iPhones, iPads and Facebook Inc. s website. The flop of the 3DS debut prompted the company to cut prices 40 percent in Japan and 32 percent in the U.S., the first time the games developer has resorted to such a move within six months of a product s debut.

Iwata, who s said Nintendo will only make titles for its own products as long as he s in charge, should scrap that strategy to avoid further alienating investors who ve driven the stock to six-year lows, fund manager Masamitsu Ohki said. One option may be acquisitions as the past successes of the Wii and DS helped Nintendo, the world s largest video-game maker, build a 1.05 trillion yen ($13.7 billion) war chest in cash, equivalents and short-term investments.

"Smartphones are the new battlefield for the gaming industry," said Ohki, a fund manager at Tokyo-based Stats Investment Management Co. "Nintendo should try to either buy its way into this platform or develop something totally new."

He declined to identify his holdings or to name any companies that Kyoto, Japan-based Nintendo should consider as acquisition targets. Yasuhiro Minagawa, a spokesman at Nintendo, declined to comment beyond statements made previously by Iwata.

Ohki isn t alone in saying Iwata should reconsider his strategy. On July 6, Nintendo shares jumped the most in almost four months after Pokemon Co., a former unit, said it s developing a game for the iPhone and handsets running on Mountain View, California-based Google Inc. s Android software. JPMorgan Chase & Co. (JPM) sent a note to clients saying the move indicated Nintendo may begin making titles for products outside its proprietary hardware.

Hours later, Nintendo denied any change in strategy, and the shares surrendered gains.

"They just don t get it," MF Global FXA Securities Ltd. said in a sales note that day, referring to Nintendo. "Sell the stock, because a management once feted for creative out-of-box thinking have just shown how behind the times they are."

Lower-than-expected demand for the 3DS, which Iwata blamed on the lack of hit titles, prompted Nintendo on July 28 to slash its profit forecast 82 percent, driving down the shares by as much as 21 percent the following day. They fell 0.2 percent to 11,430 yen, at the 3:10 p.m. close in Osaka trading, the lowest level since August 2005.

By comparison, profits at Cupertino, California-based Apple are climbing to records, helped by downloads of games such as Rovio Mobile Oy s Angry Birds on the more than 200 million iPhones, iPads and iPods sold to date. Research firm Gartner Inc. said in January it expects global sales of mobile applications to almost triple to $15.1 billion this year.

Revenue at San Francisco-based Zynga Inc., the biggest developer of Facebook games including ’FarmVille’ and ’CityVille,’ surged fivefold to $597.5 million last year.

Some traditional games companies have taken notice. Sony Corp. (6758),

maker of the PlayStation video-game console, began offering the PoxNora strategy game on Facebook last year, while Microsoft Corp. (MSFT) makes its Windows Phone software compatible with the company s Xbox Live gaming service.

Electronic Arts Inc. (ERTS), the second-largest U.S. video-game publisher, agreed last month to buy ’Plants vs. Zombies’ developer PopCap Games for as much as $1.3 billion to extend a drive into titles played on sites including Facebook. That s more than triple the $400 million Japan s DeNA Co. agreed to pay last year to buy iPhone-games developer Ngmoco Inc.

Nintendo s last acquisition was in 2007, when it bought developer Monolith Software Inc., which supplies titles including the ’Xenoblade’ role playing game, for an undisclosed sum, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The companies share a similar direction when developing software, Iwata said at that time.

For now, Nintendo is betting on price cuts - the 3DS sells for 15,000 yen from 25,000 yen starting today -- and new games to revive earnings. The company plans to introduce flagship titles such as ’Super Mario 3DLand’ in November and ’Mario Kart’ in December for the 3DS. In the U.S., the player will cost $169.99, down from $249.99 from tomorrow.

Little Expensive

"I decided to buy because of the markdown," said Mitsuhiro Taguchi, a 48-year-old office worker who was among the score of people lined up at Yodobashi Camera Co. s outlet, the biggest electronics retailer in Tokyo s Akihabara district, before the doors opened at 9:25 a.m. "I wanted it for a while, but it was a little expensive."

Yusuke Tsunoda, an analyst at Tokai Tokyo Securities Co., said Nintendo needs to develop software that better utilizes the 3-D capability of the 3DS. For investors, the focus will center on the efficacy of the price cuts, he said.

Cheaper prices may not be enough to lure some consumers.

"There are no games I want to play on the 3DS," said Chihaya Kaizaki, a 19-year-old college student who says he prefers to play dating games on Sony s PlayStation Portable. "The selection of 3-D titles available is pretty poor."

Sales of the portable 3DS machine lagged behind company expectations because of the lack of "hit software titles," Iwata told analysts and investors July 29.

More worrying to some investors are concerns that Nintendo s next-generation video-game console, the Wii U, will fail to replicate the original Wii s success, which helped drive the stock to an all-time high in 2007.

$10 Billion in Cash

The new Wii, which goes on sale next fiscal year, will feature a front-facing camera, a 6.2-inch touch screen, shoulder firing pads, an expansion slot and game controls on a flat pad.

Following the Wii U s unveiling, analysts at UBS AG and Bank of America Corp. s Merrill Lynch wrote in notes to clients that they weren t impressed by the next-generation console.

Iwata said last month the 3DS price cut is driving down price expectations for the Wii U, which may affect Nintendo s plan to release the console during the fiscal year that begins in April. The company plans to announce the specific release date and price of the product next year, he said.

Given the concerns over the outlook of Nintendo s handheld and home-console business, which account for most of the company s profit and sales, Nintendo should make better use of its more than $10 billion cash pile, investor Tetsuro Ii said.

"Nintendo should aggressively make acquisitions or increase returns to its shareholders," said Ii, president of Tokyo-based Commons Asset Management Inc., which held 2,200 Nintendo shares as of February, according to the company s website. "It s management s task to consider how to make use of the cash."

=~=~=~=

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Congresswoman Eyes McAfee Briefing on Cyber Attacks

A congresswoman on Wednesday requested more information on security company McAfee's report detailing a five-year hacking campaign that breached 72 organizations globally.

Representative Mary Bono Mack, chairman of the House Commerce subcommittee with jurisdiction over cybersecurity, said she was alarmed by the report on a slew of cyber attacks that McAfee has dubbed "Operation Shady RAT."

In a letter to Dmitri Alperovitch, vice president of threat research for McAfee and author of the report, Bono Mack requested a briefing with his research team and asked how the government and private sector could more effectively mitigate data breaches.

McAfee uncovered the biggest hacking campaign discovered to date, a multiyear campaign targeting governments, corporations, the United Nations, defense contractors and others. Its report, released last week, said a single "state actor" - which the company did not identify - seeking military, diplomatic and economic advantage was behind the attacks.

Intel Corp acquired McAfee, the world's No. 2 maker of security software after Symantec Corp, in a $7.68 billion deal earlier this year to help it offer customers using its chips more safety from hackers.

Bono Mack, in the letter, asked McAfee if it believed greater public disclosure of significant, potentially damaging breaches would help or harm efforts to curb cyber crime.

The congresswoman introduced legislation in July that would require companies that collect consumers' personal information to implement data

security measures and notify consumers of data breaches.

Bono Mack also asked about the five-year hacking campaign’s financial impact on the United States, and whether the company found evidence that consumers’ sensitive or personal information was compromised.

The high-profile cyber attacks of recent months, including breaches of Sony Corp and the websites of the U.S. Senate and Central Intelligence Agency, are classified in McAfee’s report as unsophisticated and opportunistic compared with the insidious intrusions of Operation Shady RAT.

Bono Mack’s subcommittee on commerce, manufacturing and trade has held several hearings on data security breaches, and is probing into cyber attacks’ effects on consumers, international competitiveness and the U.S. economy.

In her letter to McAfee, she also sought a better understanding of what hackers consider to be a greater target: intellectual property and national security information or consumer information linked to identity theft.

Raid Reveals Evidence of ChronoPay Ties to MacDefender Scareware

A recent raid by Russian police has revealed evidence that a company called ChronoPay is indeed behind the Mac OS X scareware program MacDefender, despite the company’s earlier denials. But while the raid and the arrest of ChronoPay’s CEO may put a dent in the company’s profits, it’s unlikely that MacDefender or its variants will disappear just yet.

When MacDefender first hit the scene, it was called MAC Defender, and it seemed to show up on Mac users’ machines after those users followed poisoned Google Image search results. Unlike many scareware apps for Windows, however, this one was actually designed to look like it was made for a Mac, and it claimed to be able to rid the user of viruses - if only he or she would hand over a credit card number. The viruses were, of course, fake; instead, the app was merely collecting payment information so that scammers could abuse the credit cards at a later date.

When we conducted our own investigation into MacDefender, we discovered that it wasn’t taking over the Mac world like some had predicted, but the scareware app had made its way into the general population to some degree. Apple soon began combating MacDefender on the OS level, and there hasn’t been much news about the malware/scareware since.

But as it turns out, whoever was behind MacDefender continued chugging along, raking in money from unsuspecting Mac users until Russian law enforcement descended on the ChronoPay office in late July, as noted by Forbes Russia. And when police searched ChronoPay’s office, they found "mountains of evidence" that ChronoPay employees were doing tech and customer support for MacDefender and a plethora of other fake antivirus programs, according to former Washington Post reporter and current security expert Brian Krebs.

One such piece of evidence was a support document that shows the website credentials and call records for various fake antivirus programs - MS Removal Tool, Clean This, MacDefender, and Marketplace Billing. This is despite ChronoPay’s statement issued in May claiming that the company was "not involved with MacDefender in anyway, not [sic] are we involved with

any virus production as has been alleged."

Krebs notes that while the raid may slow down ChronoPay and its ilk from seeding fake antivirus software onto the Internet, the industry is far too profitable for scammers to stay away for long. "Given fake AV s status as a reliable cash cow, the industry is likely to bounce back rapidly," Krebs wrote.

Operation Facebook Video Is Likely Fake, But Anonymous' Mission To 'Kill' Is Not

The Internet buzzed with malicious glee Tuesday after a video surfaced claiming that hacktivist group Anonymous plans to "kill" Facebook on November 5, Guy Fawkes Day.

"Your medium of communication you all so dearly adore will be destroyed," said the video s computer-generated voice. "If you are a willing activist or a guy who just wants to protect the freedom of information then join the cause and kill Facebook for the sake of your own privacy."

According to the video, Anonymous primary complaint about Facebook is that the ubiquitous social network invades users privacy, uses their personal information for financial gain, and acts as an appalling spying machine that helps governments from around the world keep tabs on their citizens. Another complaint is that Facebook has been deleting accounts related to Anonymous.

The video, which was originally uploaded in the middle of July, seemed authentic enough, and the sentiments expressed by the digital voiceover stood in line with Anonymous widely publicized support for freedom of information, personal privacy and anti-government views. Problem is, the video is a hoax.

Skepticism about the video was first expressed by cyber security expert Eugene Kaspersky, CEO and co-founder of Kaspersky Lab, who tweeted early today that the Operation Facebook attack "most probably is fake."

(Interestingly, Kaspersky s tweets about FacebookOp have since been deleted. Kaspersky has not yet responded to our request for comment on his reasons for removing the tweets.)

Kaspersky s speculation about the authenticity of the video is supported by Anonymous-linked Twitter user @anonops, who tweeted that "#OpFacebook is just ANOTHER FAKE! WE DON T KILL THE MESSENGER THAT S NOT OUR STYLE."

After this post by @anonops, an number of Anonymous members contradicted the "fake" claim, saying that there is in fact a plan to attack Facebook, though it may not be related to the video.

"[T]here are in fact a Op to disrupt facebook," tweeted high-profile Anonymous member @YourAnonNews. "[I]t may have nothing to do with the video, but I have been in chats."

Soon after that tweet, @anonops responded, saying, "#OpFacebook is being organised by some Anons. This does not necessarily mean that all of #Anonymous agrees with it."

In other words, the video about Operation Facebook doesn t appear to have been created by high-level members of Anonymous. But the idea to attack Facebook, on November 5 or otherwise, has been floating around amongst some members of the group. And at least a few Anons plan to wage some type of attack on the social network. What exactly that will entail remains to be seen.

China Hit by 500,000 Cyberattacks in 2010

China said Tuesday it was hit by nearly 500,000 cyberattacks last year, about half of which originated from foreign countries including the United States and India.

The news comes just days after US firm McAfee said it had uncovered a massive global cyber spying campaign it described as a "five-year targeted operation" by one unnamed actor - which many analysts said was China.

According to a government report, most of the attacks on China came in the form of Trojan software - a malicious programme that masquerades as an application - the official Xinhua news agency said.

Nearly 15 percent of the destructive programmes came from IP addresses in the United States, while another eight percent originated in India, said the report by the National Computer Network Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

China, which has the world’s largest online population with 485 million users, has itself been accused of spearheading online attacks on government agencies and companies, although Beijing has always denied this.

Chinese state media lambasted claims that China was behind the sophisticated hacking effort uncovered by McAfee, calling them "irresponsible".

According to the US computer security firm, victims of the attack included the governments of Canada, India, South Korea, Taiwan, the United States and Vietnam.

In June, Internet giant Google said a cyber-spying campaign originating in China had targeted Gmail accounts of senior US officials, military personnel, journalists and Chinese political activists.

The computers of Australia’s prime minister, foreign and defence ministers were also suspected of being hacked in March, with China under suspicion.

Chinese Authorities Find 22 More Fake Apple Stores

Authorities in China’s southwestern city of Kunming have identified another 22 unauthorised Apple retailers weeks after a fake of the company’s store in the city sparked an international storm.

China’s Administration for Industry and Commerce in the Yunnan provincial capital said the stores have been ordered to stop using Apple’s logo after Apple China accused them of unfair competition and violating its

registered trademark, state media said on Thursday.

The market watchdog agency said it would set up a complaint hotline and boost monitoring, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

It did not say if the shops were selling knock-off Apple products or genuine but smuggled models.

Countless unauthorised resellers of Apple and other brands' electronic products throughout China sell the real thing but buy their goods overseas and smuggle them into the country to escape taxes.

In July, inspections of around 300 shops in Kunming were carried out after a blog post by an American living in the city exposed a near-flawless fake Apple Store where even the staff were convinced they were working for the California-based iPhone and iPad maker.

Chinese law protects trademarks and prohibits companies from copying the "look and feel" of other companies' stores.

But enforcement is spotty, and the United States and other Western countries have often complained China is woefully behind in its effort to stamp out intellectual property (IP) theft.

In May, China was listed for the seventh year by the U.S. Trade Representative's office as a country with one of the worst records for preventing copyright theft.

Kids and Hackers, Oh My! DefCon Adds Kids Track

Fewer things seem out of place at the rough-hewn DefCon hacker convention than a swarm of kids.

For 18 years, hackers - and the computer security experts who track them - have gathered at DefCon, one of the largest and longest-running conferences of its kind, to share information about breaching and securing computers and other devices.

This year's DefCon featured what some hardcore attendees might consider to be a startling sight: children. For the first time, DefCon included discussions and tutorials for budding hackers, ages 8 to 16. Some 60 kids showed up.

Over two days, they met prominent hackers, Homeland Security officials and NSA security experts. They also listened to talks on the history of hacking and lectures on cryptography. Some of the convention's hotly contested competitions were geared toward children, as well. One contest covered lock-picking techniques to be used in the event they forget their locker combination. The kids were encouraged to find security vulnerabilities in popular technologies, from video games to computer hardware.

Children were required to have a parent with them. Many parents who brought their kids are longtime DefCon attendees who said they were excited about the bonding opportunity.

Rey Ayers, 42, an information security specialist for a utility company in the San Francisco Bay area, has attended DefCon for the past four years.

He brought his son, Xavier, 14, who has been tinkering with computers for years and already has two information technology certifications.

Ayers said it was important to introduce his son to the hacker community, adding that they've talked extensively about the difference between ethical and unethical hacking.

"I see it in him - he feels like he belongs to a clan, to a group. I'm really proud," Rey Ayers said in an interview. "I can see he has the excitement in his eyes."

Xavier, his backpack decked out in new pins with hacker logos, said he's trying to follow in his dad's footsteps. The conference has given them new ideas to explore. The two look forward to finding vulnerabilities in wireless networks together when they get home to Vallejo, California. Xavier, who hacks mostly with his dad, said he hoped to meet some kids his age at the conference who might become his hacking pen pals.

"I feel like a community here - it's like I'm not the only kid," Xavier said.

The emergence of the DefCon kids' conference comes as hackers are making headlines around the world. Though the general public often associates hacking with criminality, the engineering culture of the technology mainstream has always embraced people who explore the boundaries of what can be done with computers and other gadgets. Steve Jobs and Stephen Wozniak, the co-founders of Apple Inc., have said they considered themselves "hackers" when they created the first Apple computers in the mid-1970s.

Recent hacker attacks, however, play into stereotypical definitions of hackers. On Saturday, for instance, the hacker group Anonymous broke into 70 U.S. law enforcement websites, illustrating the growing threat from criminal hackers.

DefCon and its more-polished relative, the Black Hat technical security convention, drew thousands of people here in Las Vegas. They came for the revelry and intense discussion of new vulnerabilities in devices ranging from mobile phones to insulin pumps and critical infrastructure.

Black Hat, which is an industry sponsored event and costs up to $2,500 to enter, had more than 6,000 attendees. Vendors and executives in suits were there to schmooze and strike deals until Black Hat ended on Thursday.

DefCon, which ended Sunday, costs $150 to enter. Organizers stopped counting the number of attendees after they sold 10,000 badges on the first day. Most attendees wore t-shirts and shorts. One popular annual pastime at DefCon involves trying to identify undercover federal agents. DefCon ended Sunday.

This year many attendees rallied around a hacker named "Barkode" who has a blood disease and needs an urgent bone marrow transplant. Volunteers running a blood drive on site offered free mohawks to all donors. Conference organizers said the drive was so successful that extra supplies were needed to handle the donations.

Wolfe and Behr Crouse of Conroe, Texas proudly sported mohawks. Wolfe, 11 and Behr, 8 outlined the family hacking hierarchy.

"He’s the hacker, I’m the lockpicker. I get him in the building," Behr said.

So how long has he been a lockpicker? Less than a day, his mother laughed. He got the bug after picking locks with some success at DefCon.

The boys’ parents, Rick and Kirsten, are both techies. They came to DefCon to introduce their boys to the culture. Rick has attended for the past three years. He said he wanted Wolfe and Behr to see the constructive applications of hacking.

"The technology itself isn’t good or evil - it’s what you do with it," Rick Crouse said.

Kirsten Crouse added that they wanted to show examples of math and science in action to convey the importance of doing well in school.

"It’s an amazing opportunity for the kids to see what the options are out there," she said.

Ten-Year-Old Hacker Presents iOS Game Exploit at DefCon

A 10-year-old hacker who goes by the name CyFi uncovered a new exploit in iOS and Android games. The time-based exploit lets you advance in a game by adjusting the clock on your phone or tablet. The California girl discovered the flaw while playing an unnamed farming game.

Tired of waiting ten hours for some corn to grow, she advanced the device clock ahead and discovered an exploit that forced the game to advance prematurely. Several games are vulnerable, but their names are being withheld so the developers can apply a patch. Though they may be patched, she has reportedly looked into a few tweaks that may get around this fix.

CyFi presented this information to DefCon Kids, a part of the popular DefCon hacking conference dedicated to the budding, young hacker.

Chinese Smugglers Shoot A Zip Line Across A River To Illegally Ship iPads

Like Kramer and Newman driving the mail truck into Michigan to make a profit on bottle can returns, Chinese smugglers shot an arrow over the border between the mainland and Hong Kong connected to a rope. They then zipped down a collection of iPads and iPhones, hoping to make a profit on the tax differences between the two areas.

Gizchina is reporting that the smugglers shot the arrow from a high-rise using a crossbow in Shenzhen and hit a small house in Hong Kong, across the Sha Tau Kok river. They then sent boxes and boxes of gear over the border in the dead of night until authorities spotted boxes of electronics flying through the air into Hong Kong on a 300 meter line (my emphasis).

They nabbed $46,000 worth of gear although there is no telling how much had already gone unnoticed.

HP Cuts Tablet Price in Bid To Challenge iPad

US technology giant Hewlett-Packard (HP) on Thursday cut the price of its freshly-launched TouchPad tablet computers in a bid to gain traction in a market dominated by Apple’s iPad.

TouchPads with 16 gigabytes of memory were offered on the HP website for $400 and models with 32 gigabytes were available for $500 in what amounted to lopping $100 off the original prices.

"HP continually evaluates pricing for its products and is pleased to permanently extend its back-to-school promotion on the HP TouchPad," a company spokesman said in an email response to an AFP inquiry.

TouchPads made their US debut in early July as HP took on iPad and Android devices in the fast-growing tablet market, and are sold by major US retailers such as Best Buy and Walmart as well as on Amazon.com.

Unlike the iPad, the TouchPad supports Adobe’s Flash video format. It runs the webOS operating system, developed by Palm, the mobile-device pioneer that HP acquired last year for $1.2 billion.

The TouchPad debuted to mixed reviews, suggesting it will face an uphill climb against the iPad and other devices.

Apple touts having sold 25 million iPads since releasing the first version of the device in April 2010. It released its next-generation iPad 2 in March.

Besides the iPad, the market for tablet computers now includes the Samsung Galaxy Tab, the BlackBerry PlayBook, the Motorola Xoom and dozens of devices running Google’s Android operating system.

HP’s stock has slumped since the beginning of the year amid investor concerns that the Palo Alto, California-based company is being overtaken by younger, nimbler rivals such as Apple and Dell.

Apple’s Mac OS X Helps BSD Overtake Linux for Development

The Lure of shiny toys has helped Apple’s BSD-based Mac OS X operating system overtake Linux to become the operating system that is the second most used by developers, according to Evans Data.

Analyst outfit Evans Data reports that in North America over 80 per cent of developers still run their integrated development environments <#> (IDEs) in Microsoft’s Windows operating system. As surprising and concerning as that might be, the biggest surprise is the growing popularity of Apple’s Mac OS X, with Evans Data claiming that 7.9 per cent of developers are using it as a host operating system, pushing it past Linux, which is used by 5.6 per cent of developers surveyed.

Janel Garvin, CEO of Evans Data said, "Apple has made tremendous strides in the last few years with innovative products and technologies, so it’s quite reasonable to see developers adopting the Mac and its OS as a development environment."

Apple’s Mac OS X is based on the Mach BSD 4.4 kernel and arguably represents the easiest, albeit most costly, non-Windows alternative. It offers stability, a highly polished user interface and perhaps most importantly the choice of Vim, Emacs or Eclipse. The fact that Apple’s shiny toys are selling well definitely helps its popularity among developers of IOS applications, but it could well be developers just wanting a quick and relatively painless way out of using Microsoft’s Windows operating system that drives its success.

Some developers are forced to use Microsoft Windows because they work with the .Net framework. However doing development on systems running Linux was always seen to be a safe bet, simply because Linux has in the past been far more stable than Windows. To Microsoft’s credit, the stability of Windows has improved a great deal in the past decade and Windows 7 is on the whole also a stable desktop operating system.

The irony in all this is that Evans Data’s data shows that while Linux fans have been talking about the death of BSD for well over a decade, it seems that thanks to Apple, BSD in the form of Mac OS X appears to have overtaken Linux in one usage metric.

The iPad Trumps Oil: Apple Is Most Valuable US Company

Investors seem to think you want an iPad more than oil, as Apple Inc. became the most valuable company in the United States, surpassing Exxon Mobil Corp. on Wednesday.

Apple briefly flirted with the top spot on Tuesday afternoon before settling back slightly below the oil giant.

Wednesday was the first time that Apple managed to stay No. 1 after the stock market closed.

Apple’s stock fell 2.8 percent to close at $363.69, which brings the iPhone and iPad maker’s market capitalization to $337 billion. Exxon’s stock fell 4.4 percent to close at $68.03. That gives the oil company a market cap of $331 billion.

The change of the guard took place two days after global markets saw its worst fall since 2008 as investors worried about the U.S. credit downgrade and the possibility of another recession. Exxon had been the most valuable company since 2005, and Apple only took No. 2 in May 2010 when it surpassed Microsoft Corp.

The power shift, while largely symbolic, is a substantial milestone for Apple, which has enjoyed a triumphant comeback since the 1990s, when it struggled to stay afloat before Steve Jobs returned to take the helm.

But it’s not just the comeback. Gleacher & Co. analyst Brian Marshall says Apple is giving investors something that has never been seen before. Apple’s numbers are huge, with nearly $30 billion in revenue in the latest quarter, for example. Yet Marshall said the 35-year-old company is "growing like a startup."

"Even in 2008 and 2009 Apple grew like a weed and the world was coming to an end," Marshall said.

Apple grew its net income 70 percent to $14 billion and its revenue 52 percent to $65 billion in the fiscal year that ended last September. A year earlier, even as other companies - though not Exxon - were reeling from the economic meltdown, Apple's earnings grew 35 percent and its revenue 14 percent.

Apple wasn't always a tech darling. The company once known as Apple Computer Inc. was on a steep decline before Jobs returned in 1997.

With Jobs as CEO, Apple dreamed up gadgets that people didn't even think they needed until they got their hands on them - or saw friends and relatives with them. There were music players, smartphones and tablet computers before Apple introduced the iPod, the iPhone and the iPad. But the Apple gadgets' sleek, minimalist design and intuitive software gave them a loyal following not just by tech geeks but the everyday consumers.

"Never underestimate the power of Joe Sixpack relative to expenditures on consumer electronics," Marshall said.

People want their gadgets, especially those made by Apple, even in a recession and even as they watch their stock portfolios and retirement funds shrink.

Even so, Apple commands just a sliver of the overall smartphone and computer market. For that reason, Apple can grow at such a fast pace. "They have just a tremendous runway in front of them," Marshall said.

Exxon, which set a record in 2008 for the highest quarterly earnings by any company, has limited prospects because its growth is tethered to oil prices and new oil discovery.

Apple's growth is limited only by innovation. Investors expect it to grow as long as it keeps making products that people want. So investors are betting on Apple's stock even though it currently makes less money than Exxon.

In its latest quarterly report, Apple said stronger iPhone and iPad sales helped more than double its net income to $7.3 billion and grow revenue by 82 percent to $29 billion.

Exxon, meanwhile, posted a 41 percent increase in its second-quarter earnings to nearly $11 billion, the largest since it set a record of nearly $15 billion in the third quarter of 2008. Its revenue grew 36 percent to $125 billion.

International companies that vie for the most valuable spot include PetroChina Co., the publicly traded unit of China's biggest oil and gas company, and Petrobras, Brazil's state-controlled energy company.

In the U.S., Exxon and General Electric had been trading off the No. 1 and No. 2 spots until Microsoft surpassed them both in early 1999, at the height of the dot-com boom. By 2000, though, GE was No. 1 once again. According to data from FactSet, the three were close over the next five years, though Apple was ascending quickly. Exxon, which is based in Irving, Texas, took the top spot in 2005 and remained there until Wednesday.

Apple, which is based in Cupertino, California, generally introduces a new product every three years, which means something new in 2013. Marshall does not expect the company to slow down any time soon.

In fact, he expects Apple to pass yet another milestone next year, when it’s likely to surpass Hewlett-Packard Co. as the world’s largest technology company by revenue. In the most recent quarter, HP reported $32 billion in revenue, compared with Apple’s $29 billion in its latest quarter.

Web Campaign Raises $50,000 for 89-Year-Old Barber Hit by London Looters

While British Prime Minister David Cameron threatens to shut down social networks to help stop future citizen uprisings, an online word-of-mouth campaign has helped an elderly barber, who s business was destroyed by rioters, get back on his feet.

Started by a trio of creative interns at the renowned London advertising agency BBH, the Keep Aaron Cutting campaign aims to help 89-year-old hair-cutter Aaron Biber rebuild his barbershop after looters ransacked his establishment, which he has owned and operated in London s Tottenham neighborhood for 41 years.

The theft and destruction has left Biber with next to nothing. "I will probably have to close because I haven t got insurance and I can t afford the repairs," Biber said in a statement.

So far, compassionate Internet users have donated more than £31,000, or about $50,000, at the time of this writing. This has been accomplished primarily through social networking, along with a video about Mr. Biber s plight, and a website where concerned citizens of the world can chip in ’a couple of quid,’ as the site suggests.

Approximately 11,000 people have shared the website on Facebook, and about 8,500 have posted the page to Twitter. Your reporter discovered the campaign for Mr. Biber on Reddit (a community widely known for its generosity towards those less fortunate), where the link was posted six different times.

The BBH interns did not immediately return our request for comment on how much the campaign hopes to raise for Mr. Biber s shop.

Keep Aaron Cutting is not the only online campaign hoping to get some help from the Internet at large.

A similar effort, Save Siva s Shop, has helped raise more than $21,600 dollars for a convenience store owner (named Siva), who cannot afford to replace the merchandise that was stolen or destroyed during the riots.

In another example of Internet-spread kindness, a viral video of rioters mercilessly stealing a Sony PSP from an injured 20-year-old man prompted the company to publicly vow to replace his stolen gaming device. This came after Sony itself suffered massive damage to one of its distribution centers, which was set ablaze during London s chaos.

Before their charitable campaigns were created, both Mr. Biber and Siva benefited from having pictures of their destroyed businesses published across the Internet. Mr. Biber appeared in a photo by Getty photographer Dan Kitwood (above), which was published in the Boston Globe s popular photo-journalism blog The Big Picture. Siva appeared in a photo by Reuters

photographer Olivia Harris, which appeared on The Atlantic s In Focus photo blog, which also shows the photo of Mr. Biber.

How America Uses the Internet

With the rise of Facebook, Twitter, and now Google+, one might expect social media to be at or near the top most popular online activities. But according to a new Pew study, it still has a long way to go. The No. 1 online activities among U.S. adults are still email and search, as they have been since Pew started collecting data in 2002. 92 percent of American adults who use the Internet report using email; the same percentage they use search. They are followed getting the news (76 percent), shopping (71 percent), and finally social networking (65 percent).

An important caveat is that only adults were surveyed. We would expect those under 18 to be more likely to be on Facebook. Still, social media has made tremendous inroads into the U.S. adult population as the first users of sites like Facebook grow up and even older Americans start connecting online. Only 11 percent of U.S. adults used social media in 2005, which means we've seen a six-fold increase in six years. But whether or not Pew wants to study it, we all know what adults really use the Internet for.

=~=~=~=

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.